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## **Kandel, Romanoff, von Essen, Michele and More Join Casts for NAMT New Musicals Fest**

By Kenneth Jones



Lea Michele  
photo by Aubrey Reuben

Additional casting has been announced for musicals that will be showcased in staged readings in the National Alliance for Musical Theatre's 2007 Festival of New Musicals.

Lea Michele from *Spring Awakening* and Max von Essen of *Les Misérables* will be in the 45-minute presentation of *The Gypsy King*, one of eight works being presented in abbreviated form in front of an industry audience in Manhattan Oct. 7-8.

*The Gypsy King*, with music and lyrics by Randy Rogel and book by Rogel and Kirby Ward, directed by Marc Robin, will also feature the previously announced Sebastian Arcelus, and newly announced Megan Arnoldy, Michael Daly, Mark Fisher, Kathy Fitzgerald, Stephanie Iannarino, Paul Kandel, Geoffery Lind, Christine Mild, John O'Creagh, Ed Romanoff, Nathan Scherich and Nathaniel Shaw.

Recent additions to other shows in the fest include Renoly Santiago, Ruth Pagán, Will Sierra, Renaldy Smith in *Kingdom*; Joy Hermalyn in *Writing Arthur*; Heather Ferguson in *Tinyard Hill*; Scott Barnhardt, John Jellison and Robb Sapp in *Casey at the Bat*; and Marlayna Syms and Richard True in *The Chocolate Tree*.

NAMT also announced that its Oct. 7 Songwriter Showcase, hosted by Nancy Anderson and Kevin Cahoon, will include songs by Laurelyn Dossett and Preston Lane, Dan Lipton and David Rossmer, Keith Gordon and Martin Casella, Alan Zachary and Michael Weiner, AnnMarie Milazzo, Richard Ouzounian and Marek Norman, Michael Mahler and Alan Schumuckler, Keith Herrmann and Barry Harman, performed by John Cariani, Matt Castle, Laurelyn Dossett, Montego Glover, Danette Holden, Jeff Madden, Michael Mahler, Marisa Michaelson, AnnMarie Milazzo, Kasey Marino, Alan Schumuckler, Michael Weiner and Gordon Joseph Weiss. Eight musicals other than those in the festival proper will be represented in the Songwriter Showcase.

The 19th annual festival will be held Oct. 7-8 at New World Stages, 340 West 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Avenues.

Admission to the Festival of New Musicals is for industry only. Industry professionals interested in attending should email festival@namt.org.

The eight selected musicals and their respective directors and casts confirmed as of Oct. 1 include:

- ***The Break Up Notebook: The Lesbian Musical***  
**Music and lyrics by Lori Scarlett**  
**Book by Patricia Cotter**  
**Director: Victoria Bussert**  
**Cast: Hunter Bell, Jodi Dominick, Donna English, Ann Harada, Christine Lakin, Beth Malone, Jacqueline Maloney, Kelly Sullivan**  
It "examines a year in the life of the recently dumped Helen Hill. With her family of friends by her side she encounters: two-stepping 12-steppers, Paxil-popping lawyers, dental dams, grrrl bands, hot girl on girl action, and maybe...just maybe...the girl of her dreams."
- ***Casey at the Bat***  
**Music by Gordon Goodwin**  
**Book and lyrics by Tom Child**  
**Director: Marilyn Magness**  
**Cast: Scott Barnhardt, Rachel Coliff, Holly Davis, Sarah Jane Everman, Matt Gumley, Curtis Holbrook, John Jellison, Eric Leverton, Adam Monley, Patrick Richwood, Robb Sapp, Sarah Solie, Will Swenson, Tommar Wilson**  
Based on the classic poem, and the book "Casey On the Loose" by acclaimed sportswriter Frank Deford, "Casey comes to bat for Mudville, U.S.A. in a big-hearted, small-town tale of humor, love, greed and the competitive spirit to learn that he can be a hero even when he strikes out."
- ***The Chocolate Tree***  
**Music by Marshall Paillet**  
**Lyrics by A.D. Penedo**  
**Book by Marshall Paillet and A.D. Penedo**  
**Director: Igor Goldin**  
**Cast: Brian D'Addario, Danielle Freid, Curtis Holbrook, Cady Huffman, Felicia Ricci, Richard True, Christopher Sieber, Jason Snow, Marlayna Syms**  
"A remarkable young girl stricken with a grave illness uses her rich fantasy world and indomitable spirit to bring the impossible to life, which takes her family and the audience on a powerful, transforming journey."
- ***The Gypsy King***  
**Music and Lyrics by Randy Rogel**  
**Book by Randy Rogel and Kirby Ward**  
**Director: Marc Robin**  
**Cast: Sebastian Arcelus, Megan Arnoldy, Michael Daly, Mark Fisher, Kathy Fitzgerald, Stephanie Iannarino, Paul Kandel, Geoffery Lind, Christine Mild, John O'Creagh, Ed Romanoff, Nathan Scherich, Nathaniel Shaw, Max von Essen**  
"Two penniless entertainers stumble into a small town and land smack dab in the middle of a plot to assassinate the King. When it's discovered that one of them looks exactly like the doomed monarch, things get sticky."
- ***Kingdom***  
**Music by Ian Williams**  
**Book and lyrics by Aaron Jafferis**  
**Director: Jose Zayas**  
**Cast: Robin de Jesus, Marisa Echeverria, Renoly Santiago, Gerardo Rodriguez, Jon Rua, Ruth Pagán, Will Sierra, Renaldy Smith**  
"Inspired by the true stories of current and former Latin Kings, *Kingdom* chronicles the journey of two kids from the barrio who join the Kings in search of power and respect. When tragedy strikes, a power struggle tears the two friends apart — with devastating results."
- ***The Story of My Life***  
**Music and lyrics by Neil Bartram**  
**Book by Brian Hill**

**Director: Richard Maltby**

**Cast: Will Chase, Jeffrey Kuhn**

"A two-character musical about Thomas, a writer, and Alvin — lifelong friends, until life sent them in different directions. When suddenly faced with the task of writing Alvin's eulogy, Thomas digs through the cluttered collection of stories in his mind — with Alvin as his guide — to find a way to celebrate his friend's life and understand his untimely death."

- ***Tinyard Hill***

**Music by Mark Allen**

**Book and lyrics by Thomas M. Newman**

**Director: Casey Huhion**

**Cast: Colin Donnell, Heather Ferguson, Michael Lanning, Sally Mayes**

"In South Georgia, 1964, a blacksmith and his son are desperate to keep the family's 200-year-old shop from becoming another 'pioneer' tourist joke. But as the Vietnam Conflict escalates and a summer romance blossoms, the world grows too large to ignore in this moving story about big love and small-town dreams."

- ***Writing Arthur***

**Book, music and lyrics by David Austin**

**Musical director: Brian Nash**

**Cast: Ana Gasteyer, Malcolm Gets, Kelli O'Hara, Pamela Myers, Tim Shew, Henry Hodges, Cassidy Leonard, Colin Hanlon, Courtney Balan, Jason Dula, Michele Gray, Heather Hawkins, Victor Hawks, Kevin Kern, Sean McCourt, Michael Mendiola, Kate Pazakis, Sascha Peralta-Ramos, Halle Petro, Liz Power, Caesar Samayoa, Charly Seamon, Brian Sears, Tom Stuart**

"Arthur Danby has finally found the perfect woman. Problem is, she's a fictional character in his novel. When a very real woman steps into his life, his worlds collide. Will Arthur fall deeper into the world he's created or allow life to write itself?"

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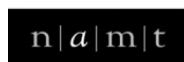
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The 2007 Festival of New Musicals is produced by NAMT new works director, Kirsten Berkman.

The eight selected shows, culled from a pool of more than 100 applicants, were selected by the NAMT festival committee, comprised of artistic directors and producers from NAMT member organizations.

Founded in 1985 and based in New York City, NAMT is a national service organization dedicated exclusively to musical theatre. NAMT has presented its annual Festival of New Musicals since 1989. The Festival brings together leading theatre producers and writers, with the goal of furthering the development and production of new musicals. NAMT membership includes not-for-profit and commercial theatres, presenting houses, universities, and independent producers.

For more information, visit [www.namt.org](http://www.namt.org).



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